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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CHANGING CAPTION)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2017

TAGS: KWBG PINS IS PGOV PTER

SUBJECT: MOI AL-YAHYA POSITIVE ABOUT PASF EFFORTS, BUT CRITICAL OF IDF INTERFERENCE

REF: JERUSALEM 02520

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: In a January 15 meeting, MoI Abd al-Razaq al-Yahya told USSC LTG Dayton that the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) had significantly enhanced law and order in the West Bank based on their doctrine of securing Palestinian areas without confronting the IDF. He said the PA wants control of the Gaza crossings, but it has not yet developed a plan to assume this responsibility. According to al-Yahya, the MoI is working to reduce the number of unnecessary PASF personnel consistent with Road Map obligations. He complained during the meeting that an ongoing IDF incursion into Nablus demonstrates how the IDF undermines PASF effectiveness, and he asked the USG to request the IDF to cease such activity. End summary.

AL-YAHYA: PASF IMPROVING LAW AND ORDER IN THE WEST BANK

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¶2. (S) PA Interior Minister al-Yahya and Deputy MoI BG Raji al-Najmi told LTG Dayton on January 15 that they have seen a 180 degree turn around in the West Bank environment of public fear and insecurity since the PASF began operating in Nablus. The PA is enforcing law and order, al-Yahya said, and cited an example of PASF coordinating with the IDF to apprehend a criminal in an Area C village. Al-Yahya said the PASF will focus on clan issues in the near future as part of their effort to reduce crime.

¶3. (S) Al-Yahya said the PASF doctrine has two pillars: first, working to improve security for Palestinians in the West Bank; and second, working to avoid confrontations with the IDF. According to al-Yahya, during an IDF incursion into Nablus on January 11, not a single PASF bullet was fired, which he said demonstrated PASF discipline.

PA SEEKS TO CONTROL GAZA CROSSINGS

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¶4. (S) Al-Yahya said the PA has repeatedly said it wants control of the Gaza Strip crossings, including Rafah. He said PA officials realize it will not be easy to administer the crossings, but he believes PA control will weaken HAMAS's public image. He said the PA has not yet worked out a detailed plan for operating the crossings.

MOI TRYING TO REDUCE NUMBER OF REDUNDANT PERSONNEL

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¶5. (S) Al-Yahya said the MoI is currently working to reduce

the number of PASF personnel. He said each service will submit within a few days a detailed organizational chart with names attached to each position. He said any individual on the payroll who does not fit in the organizational chart will be retired or dismissed. These will include personnel over retirement age, the sick, and those determined to be "unfit for service", al-Yahya said. He added that this initiative will complement the PA security plan and move the PASF towards their Road Map obligations.

AL-YAHYA: IDF INCURSION IN NABLUS UNHELPFUL

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¶6. (S) During LTG Dayton's meeting, al-Yahya was informed of an IDF incursion into Nablus. Al-Yahya said such IDF activity undermines PASF efforts to stabilize the West Bank. He said the IDF ordered the PASF back to their barracks during the incursions, which humiliates the PASF. He asked the USG to press the IDF to stop sabotaging PASF efforts.

TOUR OF STRATEGIC PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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¶7. (S) After the visit, LTG Dayton visted the new INL-funded Strategic Planning Division (SPD) offices in the MOI with SPD Executive Director Brigadier Muhammad Jibrini. The fully-furnished offices contain new desks, furniture, computers and video-conferencing capabilities.

WALLES